



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, 4th District

Supervisor Elizabeth M. Coggs, 10th District

Chair, Finance & Audit Committee

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RECYCLING RECEPTACLES AT COUNTY COURTHOUSE ARE “JUST FOR SHOW”

Supervisors respond to Audit that finds recyclables being combined with other trash

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisors Marina Dimitrijevic and Elizabeth M. Coggs, Chair of the County Board’s Finance & Audit Committee, will propose a series of changes to Milwaukee County’s recycling policy, in light of a report released by the Milwaukee County Department of Audit this morning. The Audit shows that the Administration operated recycling programs at the Courthouse and City Campus facilities with the understanding that recyclables could simply be combined with other trash. “Apparently, the Administration mistakenly believed that the recyclables were being separated at an off-site facility,” Supervisor Dimitrijevic said.

“This action goes against the spirit of the Green Print, which was adopted by the County Board and signed by the County Executive in 2007,” said Supervisor Dimitrijevic. “For decades, we have placed our recyclables into special receptacles thinking that these items would actually be recycled. It’s like we are all victims of a practical joke from the MTV show *Punk’d*. It seems that there is an Ashton Kutcher in the Courthouse.”

Thanks in part to the Green Print legislation authored by Supervisor Dimitrijevic, visitors and employees at the Courthouse are concerned about recycling more than ever before. In the absence of responsible recycling practices at certain county buildings, Supervisors Dimitrijevic and Coggs are acting immediately to correct the problem, by developing a strategic recycling plan and enacting a consistent countywide policy.

“We’ve worked hard to establish a new conservation ethic in Milwaukee County. Our airport, zoo and human services facilities have done a great job implementing recycling programs,” added Supervisor Coggs. “In fact, according to the Audit, through a centralized recycling contract, we could sell our recyclables to a local recycler. If we follow the lead of the Coggs Center, the only Milwaukee County facility that earns \$100 per ton for the sale of its paper, we could actually generate revenue countywide, which would be great news for taxpayers.”

“I don’t blame the employees who were doing their jobs. They were simply doing what they were told to do,” Supervisor Dimitrijevic added. “My concern rests with the Administration and the Facilities Management Division for not making recycling a bigger priority. Had we not requested this audit, who knows how long this practice would have continued? By not being a responsible environmental citizen, Milwaukee County, due to its apparent lack of recycling, is harming our environment. Assessing the damage is simple math. Imagine the impact of thousands of employees and hundreds of buildings, which all create tons of paper, glass and plastic. Milwaukee County’s footprint is too large to just keep adding to landfills.”

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